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Review

SHIMELIS MAZENGIA, *Nominalization via Verbal Derivation: Amharic, Tigrinya and Oromo*

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SHIMELIS MAZENGIA, *Nominalization via Verbal Derivation: Amharic, Tigrinya and Oromo*, Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes, 99 (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2015). xviii, 284 pp. Price: €78.00. ISBN: 978-3-447-10480-7.

This book, which is Shimelis Mazengia's PhD thesis, offers a detailed study of verbal derivation and nominalization at word, phrasal, and clausal levels in three main languages of Ethiopia: Amharic, Təgrəññña (of Təgray, not Eritrea), and Harärge Oromo. It is worth mentioning that Shimelis is a native speaker of two of the research languages, Amharic and Oromo, and is conversant with Təgrəññña. The present reviewer, on the other hand, can respond directly to the information on Amharic and Təgrəññña, but only indirectly to the information on Oromo. The goal of Shimelis's ambitious project is to describe the process of verbal derivation and nominalization and to contrast them in the three languages, whereby the latter aim is of considerable merit. While comparison of two Ethiopian languages has been done before, a contrastive analysis of three Ethiopian languages, like Shimelis's, is quite uncommon. Furthermore, his study clearly demonstrates small, but ultimately significant, differences between Amharic and Təgrəññña in the area of verbal derivation and nominalization as well as more 'dramatic' differences between both of these languages vis-à-vis Oromo. In the background of this contrastive approach, the author challenges the commonly-made assumption that Amharic is substantially more 'Cushiticized' than Təgrəññña and, consequently, is midway between Təgrəññña (Semitic) and Oromo (Cushitic). In the area of nominalization, as Shimelis shows, this assumption is untenable: 'The similarity of Amharic and Tigrinya to each other is much closer than is the similarity between either of them and Oromo' (p. 269). As for his theoretical approach, Shimelis adheres to Basic Linguistic Theory as propounded by Dixon but also applies other linguistic theories where useful.[1] The author sensibly and critically reviews the body of literature concerning nominalization both in general linguistic studies and in studies devoted to the languages in question. I would add one important contribution to those he mentions: Vendler's *Adjectives and Nominalizations* which, though focused on English, could be a good theoretical starting point in the area of nominalization.[2]

[1] Cf. R. M. W. Dixon, *The rise and fall of languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); and R. M. W. Dixon, *Basic Linguistic Theory*, I: *Methodology* (Oxford–New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[2] Z. Vendler, *Adjectives and Nominalizations* (The Hague–Paris: Mouton, 1968).

The book is organized into three main parts: lexical nominalization—which embraces derivation and compounding (Chapters 3, 4, and 5); phrasal nominalization (Chapter 6); and clausal nominalization (Chapter 7). Chapters 1 and 2 introduce (Chapter 1) and explain (Chapter 2) the basic concepts employed throughout the work. Chapter 8, in turn, spells out the conclusions drawn from the contrastive analysis of the three languages. At the end of each chapter there is an extended summary, which in a good, condensed manner contrasts the three languages in the given domain. In what follows, I will briefly summarize Chapters 3–7, at the same time commenting on selected issues.

In Chapter 3, 'Action Nominalization', the author discusses the process of action nominalization, that is, the process of turning a verb of any semantic type into a noun (action nominals, ANs), from both non-derived and derived verbs. Furthermore, he examines two formal types of nominalization: the productive formation of verbal nouns and the occasional formation of deverbal nouns from verbal roots and, in Oromo, from stems (for instance, Amh. *sɨk'lət* 'crucifixion', Tig. *sɨx'lət* 'hanging'/'crucifixion', Oro. *ʔijibbáatá* 'failure to succeed'), assessing the relative degree of their 'noun-ness' vs 'verb-ness' (i.e. their noun-like vs verb-like nature). Within these two formal types, ANs formed from simplex, composite, unaffixed, and affixed verbs are investigated. He devotes a balanced amount of space to discussion of each verbal group and carefully surveys different views on them (for example, his discussion of causatives, pp. 86–92). A very impressive aspect of this chapter is the treatment of a wide spectrum of iterative verbs, whose stems may undergo simple reduplication or reduplication *ad infinitum* (theoretically, up to the point of the speaker's and/or listener's exhaustion) (e.g. Amh. Multi-iterative Intensive Verbal Noun *sɨbɨrbɨrbɨrrr … malət* 'shattering completely', p. 83). In his presentation of reciprocal verbs, the author says that '[i]n addition to expressing the reciprocal morphologically, Amharic and Tigrinya both have a periphrastic reciprocal expression which can be used *instead* of the morphological reciprocal verb' (p. 131; emphasis added). However, the examples (Amh. *ɨrs bərsaccəw tərəgaggəmu* 'they cursed each other') that follow do not illustrate this rule: they contain, together, both a periphrastic (Amh. *ɨrs bərsaccəw* 'they each other') and a morphological (Amh. *tərəgaggəmu* 'they cursed each other') expression. In fact the sentences are correct, but the rule is not: the periphrastic expression only underpins the verb in expressing and reinforcing the reciprocity of the state of affairs but cannot be employed in place of the reciprocal verb. Thus, a sentence like **ɨrs bərsaccəw rəggəmu* (Amh.) is incorrect.

In Chapter 4, entitled 'Argument Nominalization', the author examines deverbal derivations when functioning as nominal arguments. Shimelis

groups these arguments into four principal kinds (Agent, Instrument, Result, and Manner, each with its own unique morphological pattern(s) of nominalization), and nine secondary ones (Patient, Adjutant, Reciprocator, Causer, Experiencer, Theme, Source, Goal, and Autobeneficiary, whose nominalization patterns are based morphologically on that of the Agent).

Chapter 5, 'Nominalization in Compounding', concerns linguistic items in which one component is a nominalized verb and the other is its argument, such as in *t'ena t'ɨbbək'a* (Amh.), *ħaləwa t'ɨʕɨnna* (Tig.), *ʔeegumsa fayyáa* (Oro.) 'health care' (lit. 'keeping of health') (p. 198). The author notes that endocentric compounds (where one component is the head and the other modifies it) are the most common in all three languages. Additionally, Amharic has right-headed compounds whereas Təgrəññña and Oromo tend to have left-headed compounds. Despite its insightfulness, this chapter seems to be unbalanced in its content: of its twenty-one pages, only six are really devoted to the chief theme; the remainder either address issues of a more general nature (such as the concept of compounding) or present various compounds in the three languages which are *not* instances of nominalization in compounding.

In Chapter 6, 'Derivation of Nominals from Clauses', the author moves from nominalization at the word level to the higher clause level. He analyses the syntax of the action nominal construction (ANC), that is, nominals derived from entire clauses with two types of verbal heads: intransitive and transitive (with and without a direct object). Carrying on from Chapter 3, he again examines the 'noun-ness' vs 'verb-ness' of ANs, checking them against verbal (e.g. tense/aspect) and nominal categories (e.g. definiteness). His conclusion is that, in general, the three languages show similar behaviour. Finally, he demonstrates that ANCs can play the same syntactic roles within a sentence as a noun phrase: they can be subjects, direct objects, objects of adpositions, and genitives.

The thrust of Chapter 7, 'Clausal Nominalization', is to investigate complement clause nominalization. The main concerns of this chapter are object complement clauses and headless relative clauses. Two other types of nominalized clauses are not examined: subject clauses (due to the author's claim that they do not exist in the three languages, but see below), and adverbial clauses (due to the fact that they do not function as noun phrases). In the discussion of object complement clauses, the author focuses on three types

of complement-taking predicates (out of fourteen proposed by Noonan):[3] utterance, desiderative, and epistemic. With regard to desiderative predicates, Shimelis shows that, in Amharic and Oromo, embedded clauses are introduced by different complementizers depending on whether the subjects of the matrix clause and the embedded clause are the same or different. For instance, in the case of Amharic, if the subjects are coreferential the complementizer *li-* is selected. In contrast, if the subjects are non-coreferential the complementizer *ɨndə-* must be used. Shimelis points out that Oromo differs from the other two languages in the case of coreferential subjects: here the complement clause takes the form of the verbal noun. However, the author does not mention the fact that, in the same syntactic circumstances, a verbal noun, either bare (2) or preceded by a preposition *lə-* (3), can be used in both Amharic and Təgrəññña. Thus, alongside sentence (1) below (given by the author as his 9.b.i on p. 249), one may add two others:

1) *[e_i [e_i* ***bet-u-n*** * * ***li-ʔi-ʃət'*** *] ʔi-fəllig-allə-hu]*
   a) (I) house-DF-ACC CP-3fs-sell 1s-want.IPF-AUX-1s
   'I want to sell the house.'

2) *[e_i [e_i* ***bet-u-n*** * * ***mə-ʃət'*** *] ʔi-fəllig-allə-hu]*
   a) (I) house-DF-ACC VNM-sell 1s-want.IPF-AUX-1s
   'I want to sell the house.'

3) *[e_i [e_i* ***bet-u-n*** * * ***lə-mə-ʃət'*** *] ʔi-fəllig-allə-hu]*
   a) (I) house-DF-ACC for-VNM-sell 1s-want.IPF-AUX-1s
   'I want to sell the house.'

An explanation of the semantic difference, which definitely exists, between sentences (1), (2), and (3) is still up for grabs.

The author then claims, unfortunately providing examples only for non-coreferential subjects, that the rule concerning the correlation between subject and complementizer which applies to desiderative predicates also applies to epistemic predicates (p. 251). For Amharic, this statement is false. Any factive or non-factive epistemic verb in Amharic, irrespective of the coreferentiality or non-coreferentiality of the subjects, takes the complementizer *ɨndə-*. The use of the complementizer *li-* with such verbs renders

[3] M. Noonan, 'Complementation', in T. Shopen, ed., *Language Typology and Syntactic Description*, II: *Complex Constructions*, 2nd edn (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 52–150, especially pp. 120–145.

an infelicitous sentence. Let me give an example sentence with a coreferential subject to underpin my argument:

4) ***fɨyyəl-w-a-n*** ***bə-t'ɨru*** ***waga*** ***ɨndə-ʃət'-ku-at*** *ʔawk'-allə-hu*
goat-DF-3fs-ACC in-good price CP-sell.PF-1s-3sfO know.IPF-AUX-1s
'I know that I sold the she-goat for a good price.'

In connection with *ɨndə-* clauses vis-à-vis ANCs, I think Shimelis is not right in saying that, in Amharic and Təgrəñña, 'the stress systems […] have no impact on the processes and/or behaviour of nominalization' (p. 41), at least not when it comes to sentence stress. In Amharic (at this point I cannot be certain whether the same holds for Təgrəñña, but I presume so), in sentences containing non-factive verbs, the sentence stress differs depending on whether we are dealing with an *ɨndə-* clause or with an ANC. Compare the following two sentences:

5) *zare* *bədənb* *ɨndə* ***'təzəgajjə-ʃ*** *ʔɨ-gəmmɨt-all-əhu*
today properly CP prepare.PF-2fs 1s-assume.IPF-AUX-1s
'I assume that today you have been well **prepared**.'

6) *zare* *bədənb* *mə-zzəgajjət-ʃɨ-n* ***'ʔɨ-gəmmɨt-all-əhu***
today properly VNM-prepare-your-ACC 1s-assume.IPF-AUX-1s
'**I assume** that today you have been well prepared' (lit. 'I assume your being well prepared today.')

In these two sentences (5 and 6), the nominalization type is correlated with the stress pattern. Whereas in (5) the stress falls on the verb taking the post-complementizer position, *təzəgajjəʃ*, in (6) it falls on the verb of the matrix clause *ʔɨgəmmɨtalləhu*. The difference in the stress pattern reflects the difference in the theme-rheme structure and, consequently, in the meaning of both constructions. It is also noteworthy that *ɨndə-* clauses are possible with all epistemic verbs, but not all of them can take an ANC form.

The last point I would like to raise concerns Shimelis's claim that clauses with a finite verb cannot function as a subject clause. To check whether *ɨndə-* clauses can function as the subject, the author uses *yɨgərmall* (Amh.) 'it is surprising' as test verb in the matrix clause and finds that a sentence with *yɨgərmall* preceded by the *ɨndə-* clause is indeed unacceptable. Therefore, by way of generalization, he concludes that subject clauses with a finite verb are not formed in the three languages. But this is a very sweeping generalization. If we replace *yɨgərmall* by, for instance, the verb *yaṭṭəraṭṭərall* 'it raises doubts', we do obtain a grammatical sentence with an *ɨndə-* subject clause:

7) ***Təkka*** ***anbəssa*** ***ɨndə-gəddəl-ə*** *y-aṭṭəraṭṭər-all*
Təkka lion CP-kill.PF-3ms 3ms-raise.doubts.IPF-AUX
'It raises doubts that Təkka killed the lion.'

Which verbs allow *ɨndə-* subject clauses needs to be studied further.

Despite occasional spelling mistakes and sporadic inconsistencies in the glossing, the book as a whole is a good read: it is organized with great clarity, written in superb English, packed with well-chosen data, and well signposted. In general, Shimelis's book is a detailed, insightful, and—not least important—very interesting piece of linguistic work. I enthusiastically recommend it to anyone dealing with Ethiopian languages.

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EYOB GHEBREZIABHIER BEIN, *Tigriyna Dictionary*, I: *Tigriyna–Italian–English: Modern Dictionary*, II: *Italian–Tigriyna–English: Modern Dictionary*, III: *English–Tigriyna–Italian: Modern Dictionary* (Switzerland: n.pub., 2015). 1301 pp. (I), 726 pp. (II), 865 pp. (III). Price: €50.00 (I), €35.00 (II), €35.00 (III). ISBN: 978-3-9524462-0-1 (I), 978-3-9524462-1-8 (II), 978-3-9524462-2-5 (III).

Der in Emmenbrücke bei Luzern lebende Erythräer ʾƎyyob Gäbrä-[ʾƎg]zi-ʾabəher Bäyyən hat mit dem fast 3000 Seiten umfassenden dreifachen Wörterbuch ein wahrhaft monumentales Werk vorgelegt.

Die Bände, für die man allerdings die Frage der möglichen Adressaten wird stellen müssen, enthalten viel Material, jedoch vorwiegend in einer Sprache, die man nur teilweise als Tigrinisch bezeichnen kann. Die im Folgenden verschiedentlich zitierten, von der sprachlichen Norm abweichenden Wörter und Phrasen werden dabei nicht durchgängig korrigiert.

Der große Umfang erklärt sich teilweise durch die weitgehende Verwendung der drei Sprachen Tigrinisch, Italienisch und Englisch, so in der Reihenfolge der Gewichtung. Es wird nicht nur in dem tigrinischen Wörterbuch nach jedem Stichwort die italienische und dann die englische Übersetzung geboten, sondern auch in den anderen Bänden jeweils die drei Sprachen. Auch wären die Bände wesentlich schmäler, wenn die Unzahl nicht-tigrinisierter italienischer Wörter (s. u.), die das Lexikon aufschwemmen, nicht berücksichtigt worden wäre.

Die erythräische (*ʾertrawənnät*) oder gar die asmarinische Prägung (Sprache der Asmarinos) des Verf. zeigt sich in dem übermäßigen Gebrauch von italienischen Wörtern, wie mindestens bis zur Vertreibung der Italiener aus dem Lande (1974) in Asmara und den anderen städtischen Zentren in